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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHGO #0345/01 1300727  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 090727Z MAY 08  
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7533  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1158  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4702  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8246  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5808  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3674  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1564  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 RANGOON 000345

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR USAID/OFDA, EAP/MLS, S/ES-O-CMS, DS/CC AND  
DS/IP/EAP; PACOM FOR LTC JAMIE MCADEN; BANGKOK FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [E](#)[A](#)[I](#)[D](#) [B](#)[M](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: CYCLONE NARGIS SITREP NO. 5

REF: A. RANGOON 342

[1](#)B. RANGOON 335 AND PREVIOUS

#### SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) EMBASSY OPERATIONS: Four eligible family members are scheduled to depart for Bangkok on May 9. The remaining eight EFMs who want to depart are scheduled to leave on May [1](#)13. The Embassy continued to operate on city power, and we continued to receive diesel shipments. New welfare and whereabouts inquiries for Amcits have decreased significantly, and the vast majority of inquiries concerning registered residents with known addresses have been accounted for. No criminal incidents involving American staff were reported.

[1](#)2. (SBU) FLIGHT REQUESTS: Embassy submitted a flight clearance request for a C-12 flight. While we have not yet received approval, DAO expects that it will. The flight will carry items for the Embassy as well as some humanitarian supplies we can deliver to NGOs here. DAO will also submit a clearance request for a C-130 flight on Monday carrying humanitarian assistance.

[1](#)3. (SBU) SITUATION ON THE GROUND: In preparation for a possible C-130 relief flight, we are working to assess the chain of custody for relief supplies arriving in Burma and to determine how supplies are being distributed in the delta. Singapore and Japan have decided to fly in relief supplies on commercial aircraft. We received written notification from the MFA that our DART team's visas have been denied. More fuel stations reopened in Rangoon, which resulted in prices and lines decreasing across the city. Food prices in Rangoon remained high due to short supplies and high demand, particularly for rice, meat, and fish. Embassy contacts estimated Cyclone Nargis damaged approximately 80 percent of Rangoon's electricity facilities, but said the government continued to slowly resume electricity supply throughout the city. There were no reports of widespread looting or public disturbances in or around Rangoon.

[1](#)4. (SBU) UPDATES: Embassy Rangoon will close for the weekend. We will send in updates of significant developments, including flight clearances, to the Operations

Center via unclass e-mail.

EMBASSY OPERATIONS

¶5. (SBU) STAFFING AND OPERATIONS: As planned, we dismissed all but essential FSN staff at 1200 to repair their homes.

¶6. (SBU) CONSULAR: New welfare and whereabouts inquiries have decreased significantly, and the vast majority of inquiries concerning registered residents with known addresses have been accounted for. Consular continues to remain in contact with Burma Immigration authorities to confirm which unaccounted Amcits may have departed or did not enter the country through Rangoon airport. We have also given unregistered names of U.S. tourists to Ministry of Hotel and Tourism officials in the event they could confirm their whereabouts through their own monitoring system of foreigners. Consular staff continues to make rounds in the city by car to hotels and guest houses.

¶7. (SBU) AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE AND FLIGHTS: Post's Authorized Departure Task Force met again on May 9. On May 9, four eligible family members (EFMs) from one family will depart Rangoon for Bangkok at 1945 hrs on Thai Air flight 306. On May 13, eight more EFMs from four families will depart post for Bangkok at 1945 hrs on Thai Air flight 306. 25 EFMs have chosen to remain at post for now, including ten EFMs who had initially expressed interest in departing. One family of four has elected to PCS later this month rather than leave now on authorized departure. Four EFMs are out of the

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country. As of May 9, there were 45 EFMs registered at Post.

¶8. (SBU) FUEL AND POWER: The Embassy continued to operate on city power. We received two more truckloads of diesel fuel on May 8. With that delivery, our diesel storage tanks are at 90 percent, and high octane tanks are at 61 percent. All Embassy-owned vehicles have full gas tanks.

¶9. (SBU) WATER: The Embassy continues to have adequate water supplies and purification capacity on hand.

¶10. (SBU) SECURITY: No criminal incidents involving American staff were reported. RSO continued to liaise with their police contacts regarding any potential threats and the security situation in Rangoon.

¶11. (SBU) HEALTHCARE: Post's medical unit has begun reviewing the immunization records of officers and their families in order to update immunizations as needed. Med reported that Rangoon General Hospital had adequate electricity and water and was fully staffed. However, hospital staff reported they were running low on antibiotics. Shwegondaing Specialist Clinic (SSC), near the Embassy, had adequate water, but was running on generator and was also running low on antibiotics. SSC was fully staffed and could conduct emergency surgery, but had postponed all elective procedures.

¶12. (SBU) OTHER: Post continued to assess the emergency needs of our FSNs and will provide that information to the Department in order to coordinate with the ongoing efforts of the FSN Relief Fund.

SITUATION ON THE GROUND

¶13. (SBU) CASUALTIES AND DAMAGE: UN assessment teams estimated the number of dead and missing at between 63,290 and 101,682. They estimated the total affected population at between 1.2 and 1.9 million (close hold). The online exile newspaper Irrawaddy reported unnamed GOB sources told them as many as 600 villages were submerged in the delta region.

Medical workers in the delta region have reported cases of cholera and fear an outbreak as survivors drink from contaminated creeks and rivers. The NLD confirmed that Aung San Suu Kyi was at home and unhurt. Her home did not suffer major damage.

¶14. (SBU) RECOVERY AND RELIEF: In preparation for the possible delivery of USG relief supplies, we are working to assess the chain of custody for relief goods arriving in Burma and to determine how they are being distributed in the delta. Singapore and Japan have flown in relief supplies on commercial aircraft. The Singaporean Embassy told us they have brought supplies in using purchased cargo space on regularly-scheduled Silk Air flights. The Japanese informed us they had already sent one shipment on a regularly scheduled Thai Air flight on May 7, but were also working with the Ministry of Social Welfare to obtain commercial flight clearances for chartered aircraft. Embassy Rangoon has begun collecting offers of aid and requests for assistance and will forward them to OFDA in Bangkok.

¶15. (SBU) FUEL: According to an official at the Ministry of Gas and Electric, nine out of Rangoon's twenty five CNG filling stations were operating on May 9. Fuel prices remain stable and lines continued to decrease across the city

¶16. (SBU) FOOD AND WATER: Food prices in Rangoon remained high due to short supply and high demand. Rice stocks throughout the city were almost depleted, and prices were approximately 67 percent higher than before the cyclone. Prices of other commodities, such as cooking oil, meat, chicken, and fish, continued to increase dramatically due to short supply and high demand. However, fruits and vegetables

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from Northern Burma have entered the Rangoon market via the recently-reopened railroads, alleviating some pressure on food supplies and prices (Reftel A).

¶17. (SBU) TRANSPORTATION: At least three more main bus lines began running on May 8, although approximately 50 percent fewer busses were operating on the routes. Fares were still slightly higher than before the cyclone but continued to drop.

¶18. (SBU) ELECTRICITY: Embassy contacts estimated Cyclone Nargis damaged approximately 80 percent of Rangoon's electricity facilities, including overhead cables and power substations. The Government continued to work to resume electricity supply throughout the city, and had restored power to six townships in downtown Rangoon and to parts of approximately 12 townships around the city. Many buildings, offices, homes, fuel stations, and hospitals that receive power from underground power cables reported that they have received city power, although supply was not constant. Myanmar Electrical Power Enterprise (MEPE) and Yangon City Electric Power Supply Board (YESB) staff was working to repair overhead cables, removing trees and replacing lost or damaged power lines. GOB officials would not say how long it will take to restore electricity to all of Rangoon's 33 townships, but Embassy contacts predicted it would take several months (see Septel).

¶19. (SBU) LAW AND ORDER: There were no reports of widespread looting or public disturbance in or around Rangoon.

¶20. (SBU) VISAS: We received written notification from the MFA that our DART team's visas have been denied "due to the difficulties for providing logistic support and preoccupation with heavy load of emergency relief works in the affected areas." Today's Burmese version of the regime-mouthpiece New Light of Myanmar newspaper reported that a chartered relief plane from Qatar was turned back because it contained a search and rescue and media team. The article contained a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that said

Burma is not ready to accept foreign relief teams yet.  
VILLAROSA